443 diers (ambulantes) who walk through the area in the summer selling combs, ribbons, jewelry, and perfumes.

561 One of the most important factors influencing the fortunes of
565 the town of Vila Recôncavo is the diversity of attitudes toward
369 it held by different segments of the local population. The most powerful group, although small in number, is that of the plantation and sugar-mill owners. The orientation of this group is polarized between the capital city, Salvador, and the plantations. There is no one living in the town who is included in the same social stratum as these people, and therefore the town is not a social drawing point for them as it might be in the plantation area of the southern United States. Vila does not represent a shopping center for them, and it is not an outlet for their sugar. Since they are so near the capital, business is transacted there rather than in the small rural town with its poor communications. This group as a whole looks upon the town as a decadent and backward place. There is little or no feeling among these people that they should "do something" to improve the town, to which they feel little or no allegiance. Rather, their allegiance is first to Bahia and to their own social class in the state, and second to the Recôncavo, the original seat of that class.

The plantation and sugar-mill workers also disregard Vila to a large extent, generally not considering it worth the effort involved in getting there. For these people the market in Centro and the sugar mill store are the major attractions of the area. Their social life is centered almost entirely within the plantation or at the sugar mill.

The town dwellers themselves have an ambivalent attitude toward their town, for, while they also feel that Vila is backward and without opportunity for personal advancement, they
369 nevertheless consider themselves an urban group in contrast
365 to the plantation workers. Recent improvements in the town, such as the installation of electricity and the introduction of radios, movies, and other electrical appliances, as well as the pavement of the mud streets with cobblestones, have been a great help in alleviating the former forlorn air of the town, once known as the "abandoned" town. The local population still speaks of this earlier state a great deal, almost with the haunting fear that such conditions might return. The funds for these
[652] public works came from sources outside the county, that is,
[653] from grants of money by the state government during the epoch of the interventores, the governors appointed during the dic-

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tatorial regime of Getulio Vargas. One of the last of these was a son of the county who wished to leave a permanent remembrance of his family in the town. Most of the work was done by local labor, which brought a certain measure of prosperity to the town. Certainly the appearance of the town changed. New façades were added to many houses; others were freshly painted in gay colors; and some people constructed cement sidewalks in front of their homes. At night the streets are brighter because of the electric street lights (which are turned off at midnight) and because of the rays of bright electric light passing through the cracks of the closed window shutters and doors.

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Almost every evening at dusk, however, the electric power of the countryside is shut off for at least an hour because of inadequate generating facilities at the main plant, leaving the countryside and small towns in darkness. At this hour the town returns to its past, and one seems to be in an era one, two, or three hundred years ago. Tiny oil lamps (<u>fifós</u>) are lighted, or an occasional kerosene lamp, the soft and short-reaching rays of which barely penetrate the heavy darkness of the house and do not reach the street. A hush falls over the town during the spell of darkness. All the old fears of shadows, malevolence, and <u>lobishomens</u> (werewolves) return. The family congregates in one room, for no one wants to be alone, speaking softly as though not to break the spell. The streets are suddenly emptied, and the silence is broken only by the occasional forlorn braying of a donkey left wandering outside.

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Without light there is no life in Vila Recôncavo. The evening religious service is delayed; the movie is delayed; the bar closes. One thinks of the impermanence of the new prosperity, remembering how quickly the moist salt air can blacken the gayest colored building, how the heavy rains can wash away the foundation of a mud house, how fast the weeds can grow in the cracks of the pavement, and how by the flick of a switch in some faraway place the magical lights are removed. A heavy gloom settles over the town and remains until, as suddenly as they went off, the lights return. Life picks up again, radios blare forth at fullest volume, and Vila Recôncavo once again is grateful for light and life, however impermanent.

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Although this is a traditional area, few local people know its history. Only a few can provide historical data going back further than one generation, and even fewer know anything of what lies behind the "glorious past" of Vila Recôncavo, a

VILA RECONCAVO

[The Usina]

the factory is undergoing a reformation which will raise its capacity to over one hundred thousand sacks, and the legal capacity will be readjusted.

Usina São Pedro, although the smallest, is representative of the others and experiences the same problems and difficulties. It differs from some in that it is a family enterprise. The stockholders are nearly all members of the Conde family, and the operations are directed by two members of the family. The factory itself was one of the three built by the state government in 1900 on land controlled by the Navy,[5] on the edge of the Bay, which provides excellent year-round transportation facilities. The mill was acquired in 1909 by the Conde family with two plantations, to which the family has since added four other contiguous plantations. The corporation has a total area of slightly over four thousand acres, mostly of rich massapê soil. The factory receives cane from the plantation of Dona Sinhá, who is also a member of the Conde family by birth and by marriage. It also gets cane from four other plantations within the community and four outside the community, which send their cane by the traditional sailboat. In addition, the factory owns a 2,324-acre plantation in the county of Purificação which is used for grazing and raising cattle and for supplying wood for the factory fires. There is direct water transportation between the factory and the plantation in Purificação.

The designation usina has several meanings which are quite similar to the meanings of the older term, engenho. In its larger context, usina means the entire land-factory combination, including the mill and all the plantations belonging to the corporation. More specifically, usina means the factory building itself. In another context, usina simply indicates the population nucleus, including the factory, the owner's house, and the other buildings.

The usina or factory nucleus roughly follows the same settlement pattern of the old plantations. The point of orientation is the factory building, near which stand the chalet and other homes of the owning family, which are grouped together in a park of royal palms and mango trees. Usually a small chapel or oratory is included in one wing of the chalet, where

5. The shoreline bordering salt water is controlled to the depth of 33 meters by the Brazilian Navy.

VILA RECÔNCAVO

[Town Life]

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632 years ago, after determining that these crops were not sufficiently rewarding, he made a large-scale planting of white
463 cacao. It is still too early to speak of the outcome of this ven-
[242] ture, for the trees have not yet started to give their first fruit, but this instance illustrates his usual energetic spirit.

Dr. Aliança took the office of mayor seriously and gave a
159 great deal of energy to it. His accomplishments were many
632 in the space of a few years: the paving of most of the town's
463 streets, the installation of electric lights on the streets, the formation of a company to sell electricity to those who wanted
• 653 it, the installation of telephone communications with the capital, and the construction of a new, modern primary school building. As a result of his personal energy and direction these works were completed, or at least nearly so, when he left the office. (According to law, the mayor cannot be re-elected). However, with the exception of building a bridge, nothing was done in the rural areas of the county. Traditionally any public works in the county are done in the county seat.

441 Many of the merchants in Group 1 are small operators.
463 The capitalization of the stores in Vila Recôncavo runs from Cr$100.000,00 to as low as Cr$5.00,00. However, no matter
443 how small the store, it provides a living for someone, or as
[471] they say in Vila Recôncavo, "Sempre da!" To the ordinary town citizen it is difficult to get enough capital together to open a store, but once opened it rarely closes for lack of business. Of the twelve stores in town, eight are owned and operated by men, and the other four belong to women. The best store in
441 town and the poorest one both belong to women. The "best"
444 store, Dona Carmen's, is the oldest, located on the main
[428] street leading from the boat dock. At present it is owned by Dona Carmen, who inherited it from her brother. It combines a general store and a bakery, and its prices are often slightly higher than those in other stores. It serves most of the people living in the older section of town. In addition to having the largest stock of ordinary foods, the store also carries finer packaged products such as wines, jellies, and preserves.

444 Bread is baked in the afternoon and delivered to the doors
256 of the customers' houses, still warm and with the delicious odor always associated with bread fresh from the oven. The bakery's customers for the most part have standing orders, receiving bread or rolls each day in time for supper. What is left over is hawked through the streets by the delivery boy,